

**For Immediate Release:**  
Nov. 8, 2006

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**San Diego River Conservancy Selects New Executive Officer**  
*Board Taps Point Loma's Michael Nelson to Lead Natural Resource Organization*

San Diego – Point Loma resident Michael Nelson, a public administrator with expertise in resource conservation management, has been named executive officer of the San Diego River Conservancy. The conservancy board selected Nelson last month following a search launched in September.

"Michael is ideally suited for this position," said San Diego Councilmember Donna Frye, who serves as the board chair. "His extensive experience in securing funding for natural resources will help ensure the Conservancy's mission to preserve and restore the San Diego River," she added.

Nelson, who most recently served as a private consultant, returns to the public sector to run the day-to-day operations of the conservancy. He will report to the conservancy's governing board. For several years previous to his appointment, Nelson helped develop conservation plans, land acquisitions and easements for the American Farmland Trust and the Conservation Fund. Between July 2000 and October 2003, Nelson served as Maryland's assistant natural resources secretary for capital grants and loans. In this position he was responsible for the administration of a \$150 million grant and loan program for state and local government. He has more than 30 years of professional experience and holds a Bachelor's of Science from the University of Maryland.

"I'm confident that the San Diego River Conservancy can become the financial focal point for conservation along this magnificent river that is a part of California's cultural heritage," Nelson said. "The Conservancy is a testament to the state's commitment to this extraordinary natural treasure and I'm grateful to the board for this opportunity."

The conservancy's nine-member governing board consists of both state and local representatives. The board's diversity reflects its commitment to conserve an area of statewide significance. The San Diego River Conservancy is one on nine California conservancies. It was established by California Legislature (AB 2156, Kehoe) to preserve, restore and enhance the San Diego River Area. The Conservancy is an independent, non-regulatory organization within the Resources Agency.

The San Diego River area is an historic, archeological and biological treasure of statewide significance. It is the "Birthplace of California" and holds the key to the state's heritage. Inhabited for more than 8,000 years, the San Diego River Area boasts no less than 29 State Historic Landmarks, three state parks and rich archeological resources.

Nelson assumes the executive officer position immediately.